

The Greener Side of Summer ...

Summer 2013 Edition

Publication by the City of Muscatine, Solid Waste Division of Public Works



Getting to Know The Solid Waste Division Staff and What They Do.

By: Laura Liegois: Solid Waste Manager

Recently I was a speaker at a workshop to encourage girls to further their education in college and to follow their career goals. It was an honor to meet with the girls who ranged in age from 15 to 19 years old and to encourage future educational growth.

A time came for questions and answers from the audience of young ladies. One girl raised her hand and asked me, "When you were my age, did you dream of being charge of the garbage trucks and a landfill facility?" I couldn't help but smile and I replied, "No, but I wouldn't trade the opportunity I have had for anything."

I have had the privilege to be a part of two different locations with the same goal in mind. To provide solid waste services that are environmental and economical for residents and businesses. The men and women who work in the solid waste management field have numerous tasks that not everyone would even dream of wanting to do once a month but they do it every day.

Over the next several issues of The Greener Side, I would like to share the insights of our operations and the staff that make it happen. This issue features the staff of the Refuse Collection Department. This is the crew that gets out on the street at 5:00 a.m. to pick up and dump the waste placed at the curb in all types of weather.

Over the summer, check out Muscatine Power and Water's public access channel for the schedule of when to view The Greener Side's television program on what happens on the refuse collection routes. Join me as we follow a truck on route and meet some of our staff that help keep our community clean.

The Great Mississippi River Clean Up September 28, 2013

Have you ever heard about Chad Pregracke and The Living Lands and Waters group?

If you have, you know this is an ambitious group of individuals who are on a mission to clean up the Mississippi and other waterways of waste that has made its way into rivers and streams by tragic events of flooding or illegal dumping.

Muscatine residents can have the chance to work with the dynamic individuals of Living Lands and Waters on Saturday, September 28, 2013, for The Great Mississippi River Clean Up. Muscatine is hosting the cleanup and the efforts are community-wide to clean up areas of the Mad Creek area and out on the Mississippi River.

The event will be from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Volunteers are to meet at the upper boat ramp at Riverside Park. Volunteers are encouraged to sign up in advance at the Living Lands and Waters' website at <http://www.livinglandsandwaters.org>. If you have a boat and would like to assist with boating people and waste picked up, you can also sign up on the Living Lands and Waters website.

Additional questions can be directed to Site Coordinator Laura Liegois by emailing her at lliegois@muscatineiowa.gov or by calling 563-263-9689.



Do you have a basement full of old paint and cleaners? Not sure what to do with them?

For proper disposal, bring them to the Muscatine Recycling Center and Transfer Station.

1000 S. Houser St. Muscatine, Iowa 563.263.9689

It's All In A Day's Work.. City of Muscatine Refuse Collection Program

When most people are still a sleep, a crew of six get up and arrive to work before 5:00 a.m. to pick up the waste left at the curb. Unless there is a heavy snow-storm or a ice on the roadway, this crew is out cleaning up the City of Muscatine and Fruitland Monday – Friday.

History of Collecting Garbage:

Most individuals would think that collection of waste has always happened in communities. This was not always the case. Before collection of waste was created, it was common for people to throw their unwanted items out the windows and doors onto the street for people or animals to scavenge from. Some form of collection has been around since the 1700's. Benjamin Franklin was the founder of services called street cleaning and trash removal. (American Forest Foundation, 1997)

Today, most states have environmental laws that require municipalities to collect garbage on a weekly basis. The Iowa State Code requires that municipalities provide garbage collection and yard waste collection to their residents. How they do this, is up to individual communities to figure out. (Code of Iowa, 2013)



The City of Muscatine has taken waste management to a whole new level. At one time it was all considered garbage, but as rules were put into place to protect our environment, recycling became more a part of our culture.

Changes in Refuse Collection started in the 1980's with collection of yard waste separately from regular household garbage. Landfills were not allowed to accept yard waste because of the ability to produce methane gas. Also, composting was another form of recycling. Trees and brush materials were also banned from landfills and now are mulched into woodchips. Both compost and wood mulch add value to residents yards and gardens.

Another change in collection is recycling. Yes, recycling has been around for decades and I am certain my grandparents and parents did it before it was the popular thing to do. However, recycling plastic, paper, metal, and glass keeps materials out of landfills. Numerous communities began recycling in the 1990's with drop off and curbside programs. The City of Muscatine has a curbside recycling contract with Allied Waste. Over 95% of our households recycle in this program.



Photos:

Upper Right - City of Muscatine's current refuse collection truck.

Lower Left - City of Muscatine's Refuse Collection Crew of 1953 - Spring Clean Up Week.



Refuse collection was one of the top 10 dangerous jobs in the United States in 2012. (Chicago Tribune, 2012) Most people would not view the work done by the garbage collection and disposal service as a dangerous situation. However, refuse collectors are out in the flow of traffic, maneuvering between cars and picking up garbage cans and bags of waste.

Each one of our staff members makes 500 plus stops a day to pick up garbage to be delivered for disposal to the Muscatine Transfer Station and Muscatine County Landfill. This process is continuous movement for staff of bending, picking up containers, and dumping waste into the back of the truck.

The City of Muscatine's staff takes precautions when driving, watching how they lift containers and bags, and other measures to work safely. Over the years, numerous communities as well as the private sector of refuse collection have moved forward with automated collection for the safety of their staff and public.

Automated collection is the wave of the future for collecting waste. The City of Muscatine will be involved in a test pilot over the next year with approximately 750 containers for residents to place waste in. The containers will be dumped with tipper on the back of our current trucks. If the program is successful, automated trucks and more containers will be added to routes.

Automating refuse collection allows for staff to stay safe from traffic and have less injuries. Over time it is common for back, arm, and leg injuries to occur for workers due to repetitive movements. The other benefit of automation is utilizing containers that will help with beautification of our community.

Today, the City of Muscatine has five full-time refuse collection drivers, several part-time workers, a lead worker, and a solid waste supervisor. These employees are the main focus of the operation. Support staff include a clerk and a maintenance worker from the Transfer Station.

Several of our staff, who work for Refuse Collection, have worked for the City for 20 plus years. Raymond King has been with the Solid Waste Division since he was 18 years old. Raymond celebrated his 35th year with the City in 2012.

The refuse collection staff is at the forefront of helping keep our community clean. The efforts of spring cleanup in April this past year brought in 580 tons of waste. This is not including the five semitrailers of electronic waste, 124 appliances, and 4 semitrailers of tires that were picked up. Spring Cleanup Week is a joint effort of the Refuse Collection and Street Maintenance Department for the City of Muscatine.



Photos:

Upper Right and Lower Left - City of Muscatine's current refuse collection staff collecting waste.

References: Chicago Tribune, 9/24/12, Code of Iowa, 2013, and Exploring Environmental Science Issues: Municipal Solid Waste, Project Learning Tree, 1997.



Fourth of July Holiday Hours and Services for Solid Waste

**Muscatine Recycling Center
and Transfer Station: CLOSED**

Compost Site: CLOSED

Refuse Collection for the City of Muscatine and Fruitland:

Monday July 1 - Monday Route

Tuesday July 2 - Tuesday Route

Wednesday July 3 - Wednesday Route

Thursday July 4 - NO COLLECTION

Friday July 5 - Thursday and Friday Route

Curbside Recycling for the City of Muscatine and Fruitland Week B Route:

Monday July 1 - Monday Route

Tuesday July 2 - Tuesday Route

Wednesday July 3 - Wednesday Routes

Thursday July 4 - NO COLLECTION

Friday July 5 - Thursday Route

Saturday July 6 - Friday Route

***Please remember that curbside recycling is a day
behind after a holiday.***

Compost Site

The Compost Site is in its prime season. Leaves, grass clippings, trees, brush, and similar vegetation is accepted. Wood mulch and compost is available to residents. A site attendant is available to load Tuesday - Saturday.



*Hours: Sunday– Friday: Noon—6:00 PM
Saturday: 9:00 A.M. - 6:00 PM*

Calendar of Events:

**Friday, September 6, 2013 -
4th Annual Community
Block Party -
Muscatine Community Y
5:30 –7:30 PM**



**Saturday, September 28, 2013 -
The Great Mississippi
River Clean Up
Riverside Park, Muscatine, IA
9:00 AM - Noon.
Registration is required at:
www.livinglandsandwaters.org**

Blue Zones

Clean Up Walking Moai

What is all the hype about Muscatine becoming a Blue Zones community? It is a big deal to be named one of the demonstration sites showing that we as a community can change the way we live to improve all of our lives.

Two of the steps is to move naturally and interact with others. A Walking Moai is a small group of people who get together for conversation and walking. How about getting together, having a conversation, and cleaning up our community all at the same time?

Coming in September Blue Zones will have a kick-off event for the community. Walking Moai's are forming and will start soon! For more information on joining the Clean Up Moai contact Laura Liegois at 563.263.9689 or lliegois@muscatineiowa.gov

To find out more about the Blue Zones Project and pledge/actions visit: www.bluezonesprojects.com



**Where do I find
Information about
Solid Waste Services
For Muscatine?**

Visit www.muscatineiowa.gov